More Than 3 Million Children Worldwide Have Hepatitis C

There is a strong association between the prevalence of the virus among adults and its prevalence among children.

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Worldwide, more than 3 million children are living with hepatitis C virus (HCV), Healio reports.

Homie Razavi, PhD, the managing director at the Center for Disease Analysis Foundation, led a research team that conducted a comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed studies from 2000 to 2019 that reported HCV prevalence estimates for children 18 years old or younger. The analysis covered all of the globe's 249 countries and territories.

The investigators fed those figures into mathematical models and estimated that 0.13% of children worldwide, or 3.26 million, have hep C. There was a strong association between the prevalence of hep C among adults and that seen among children. In particular, HCV prevalence among women was strongly associated with prevalence of the virus among children 4 years old and younger.

Mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy or childbirth is not the only source of new infections of hep C among children, the investigators found. Children are still at risk for the virus as they age.

The study authors stressed that conducting refined estimates of the number of children who are tested, diagnosed, linked to medical care and eligible for treatment for hep C may facilitate efforts to scale up testing and treatment efforts.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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